

attorney's fees as has actually been paid, or an amount which at the time of filing may reasonably be expected to be paid. If on the final audit of a return the fees claimed have not been awarded by the proper court and paid, the deduction will, nevertheless, be allowed, if the district director is reasonably satisfied that the amount claimed will be paid and that it does not exceed a reasonable remuneration for the services rendered, taking into account the size and character of the estate and the local law and practice. If the deduction is disallowed in whole or in part on final audit, the disallowance will be subject to modification as the facts may later require.

(2) A deduction for attorneys' fees incurred in contesting an asserted deficiency or in prosecuting a claim for refund should be claimed at the time the deficiency is contested or the refund claim is prosecuted. A deduction for reasonable attorneys' fees actually paid in contesting an asserted deficiency or in prosecuting a claim for refund will be allowed even though the deduction, as such, was not claimed in the estate tax return or in the claim for refund. A deduction for these fees shall not be denied, and the sufficiency of a claim for refund shall not be questioned, solely by reason of the fact that the amount of the fees to be paid was not established at the time that the right to the deduction was claimed.

(3) Attorneys' fees incurred by beneficiaries incident to litigation as to their respective interests are not deductible if the litigation is not essential to the proper settlement of the estate within the meaning of paragraph (a) of this section. An attorney's fee not meeting this test is not deductible as an administration expense under section 2053 and this section, even if it is approved by a probate court as an expense payable or reimbursable by the estate.

(d) *Miscellaneous administration expenses.* (1) Miscellaneous administration expenses include such expenses as court costs, surrogates' fees, accountants' fees, appraisers' fees, clerk hire, etc. Expenses necessarily incurred in preserving and distributing the estate are deductible, including the cost of storing or maintaining property of the

estate, if it is impossible to effect immediate distribution to the beneficiaries. Expenses for preserving and caring for the property may not include outlays for additions or improvements; nor will such expenses be allowed for a longer period than the executor is reasonably required to retain the property.

(2) Expenses for selling property of the estate are deductible if the sale is necessary in order to pay the decedent's debts, expenses of administration, or taxes, to preserve the estate, or to effect distribution. The phrase "expenses for selling property" includes brokerage fees and other expenses attending the sale, such as the fees of an auctioneer if it is reasonably necessary to employ one. Where an item included in the gross estate is disposed of in a bona fide sale (including a redemption) to a dealer in such items at a price below its fair market value, for purposes of this paragraph there shall be treated as an expense for selling the item whichever of the following amounts is the lesser: (i) The amount by which the fair market value of the property on the applicable valuation date exceeds the proceeds of the sale, or (ii) the amount by which the fair market value of the property on the date of the sale exceeds the proceeds of the sale. The principles used in determining the value at which an item of property is included in the gross estate shall be followed in arriving at the fair market value of the property for purposes of this paragraph. See §§ 20.2031-1 through 20.2031-9.

[T.D. 6296, 23 FR 4529, June 24, 1958, as amended by T.D. 6826, 30 FR 7708, June 15, 1965; 44 FR 23525, Apr. 20, 1979]

§ 20.2053-4 Deduction for claims against the estate; in general.

The amounts that may be deducted as claims against a decedent's estate are such only as represent personal obligations of the decedent existing at the time of his death, whether or not then matured, and interest thereon which had accrued at the time of death. Only interest accrued at the date of the decedent's death is allowable even though the executor elects the alternate valuation method under section 2032. Only claims enforceable

against the decedent's estate may be deducted. Except as otherwise provided in § 20.2053-5 with respect to pledges or subscriptions, section 2053(c)(1)(A) provides that the allowance of a deduction for a claim founded upon a promise or agreement is limited to the extent that the liability was contracted bona fide and for an adequate and full consideration in money or money's worth. See § 20.2043-1. Liabilities imposed by law or arising out of torts are deductible.

§ 20.2053-5 Deductions for charitable, etc., pledges or subscriptions.

A pledge or a subscription, evidenced by a promissory note or otherwise, even though enforceable against the estate, is deductible only to the extent that—

(a) Liability therefor was contracted bona fide and for an adequate and full consideration in cash or its equivalent, or

(b) It would have constituted an allowable deduction under section 2055 (relating to charitable, etc., deductions) if it had been a bequest.

§ 20.2053-6 Deduction for taxes.

(a) *In general.* Taxes are deductible in computing a decedent's gross estate only as claims against the estate (except to the extent that excise taxes may be allowable as administration expenses), and only to the extent not disallowed by section 2053(c)(1)(B) (see the remaining paragraphs of this section). However, see § 20.2053-9 with respect to the deduction allowed for certain State death taxes on charitable, etc., transfers.

(b) *Property taxes.* Property taxes are not deductible unless they accrued before the decedent's death. However, they are not deductible merely because they have accrued in an accounting sense. Property taxes in order to be deductible must be an enforceable obligation of the decedent at the time of his death.

(c) *Death taxes.* No estate, succession, legacy or inheritance tax payable by reason of the decedent's death is deductible, except as provided in § 20.2053-9 with respect to certain State death taxes on charitable, etc., transfers. However, see sections 2011 and 2014 and

the regulations thereunder with respect to credits for death taxes.

(d) *Gift taxes.* Unpaid gift taxes on gifts made by a decedent before his death are deductible. If a gift is considered as made one-half by the decedent and one-half by his spouse under section 2513, the entire amount of the gift tax, unpaid at the decedent's death, attributable to a gift in fact made by the decedent is deductible. No portion of the tax attributable to a gift in fact made by the decedent's spouse is deductible except to the extent that the obligation is enforced against the decedent's estate and his estate has no effective right of contribution against his spouse. (See section 2012 and § 20.2012-1 with respect to credit for gift taxes paid upon gifts of property included in a decedent's gross estate.)

(e) *Excise taxes.* Excise taxes incurred in selling property of a decedent's estate are deductible as an expense of administration if the sale is necessary in order to (1) pay the decedent's debts, expenses of administration, or taxes, (2) preserve the estate, or (3) effect distribution. Excise taxes incurred in distributing property of the estate in kind are also deductible.

(f) *Income taxes.* Unpaid income taxes are deductible if they are on income property includible in an income tax return of the decedent for a period before his death. Taxes on income received after the decedent's death are not deductible. If income received by a decedent during his lifetime is included in a joint income tax return filed by the decedent and his spouse, or by the decedent's estate and his surviving spouse, the portion of the joint liability for the period covered by the return for which a deduction will be allowed is the amount for which the decedent's estate would be liable under local law, as between the decedent and his spouse, after enforcement of any effective right of reimbursement or contribution. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, the deductible amount is presumed to be an amount bearing the same ratio to the total joint tax liability for the period covered by the return that the amount of income tax for which the decedent would have been liable if he had filed a separate return for that period bears to the total of the